

September 16, 2005

Honorable John Stahl, Chairman
House Committee on Family & Children Services
S1186 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Stahl:

As a partner with the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network in Grand Rapids, I am pleased to offer support on behalf of the Heart of West Michigan United Way for HB 5110.

As a funder of after school programs throughout Kent County, the Heart of W. MI United Way sees first hand the benefit to supporting critical quality programs for children and youth during out-of-school time. Partnering with the ELO Network we believe that when programs meet a set of defined quality standards of care they are better able to meet the needs of the children they serve. We believe that HB 5110 will improve the accountability of after school programs while enhancing opportunities for program accessibility and delivery in Michigan.

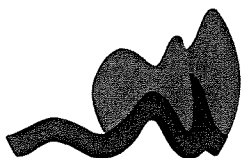
United Way is the recipient of a TANF after school grant, so we have a stake in quality programs that operate in safe sites. We partner with the Grand Rapids Public Schools and several community agencies in providing services to four elementary schools under this grant. In addition, we have been highly involved in our after school community collaborative, Expanded Learning Opportunities Network.

We appreciate you and your committee members for addressing this bill in such a timely manner and urge your support for passage. Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



Robert Haight, President
Heart of West Michigan United Way



Honorable John Stahl, Chairman
House Committee on Family & Children Services
S1186 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Stahl:

As a partner with the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network in Grand Rapids, I am pleased to offer support on behalf of the Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department for HB 5110.

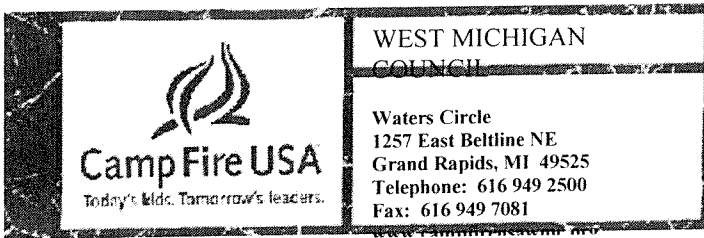
Quality after school programs are critical for children and youth during out-of-school time. As a partner in the ELO Network, a community collaborative working to ensure every child has access to quality after school programs, we believe that programs fulfilling a set of defined quality standards of care are better equipped to meet the needs of the children they serve. We believe that HB 5110 will improve the accountability of after school programs across the state while enhancing opportunities for program accessibility and delivery in Michigan.

The Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department's "Recreation Reaps Rewards" program has been providing quality after school programming since 1992. The program has had the opportunity to serve as many as 7, 500 elementary-aged youth and teens in over thirty targeted neighborhoods. The primary goal of our program is to provide a safe, secure environment where participants have access to academic, enrichment, recreation and life skills activities that are designed to be more than just play. Through after school programming, participants enjoy present learning for future gains. These activities teach, promote and reward the development of character, self-esteem, socialization skills and problem solving abilities.

We appreciate you and your committee members for addressing this bill in such a timely manner and urge your support for passage. Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Larry Barnes
Recreation Services Specialist
Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department



September 19, 2005

Honorable John Stahl, Chairman
House Committee on Family & Children Services
S1186 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Stahl:

Camp Fire USA West Michigan Council has been a partner with the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network in Grand Rapids since its inception and I am pleased to offer support for HB 5110.

Quality after-school programs are critical for children and youth during out-of-school time. As a partner in the ELO Network, a community collaborative working to ensure every child has access to quality after-school programs, Camp Fire believes that programs fulfilling a set of defined quality standards of care are better able to meet the needs of the children they serve. We believe that HB 5110 will improve the accountability of after-school programs across the state while enhancing opportunities for program accessibility and delivery in Michigan.

Founded in 1919, Camp Fire USA West Michigan Council is a 501(c)(3) co-educational youth development agency that builds caring, confident youth and future leaders in our community. For the last ten years, Camp Fire USA has brought youth development opportunities to school-aged youth living in Grand Rapids' low-income neighborhoods through after-school and summer programs. In Camp Fire, youth have the opportunity to spend time in an environment where they can learn new things, build meaningful relationships with adults, and experience positive role models. Our curriculum helps children and youth accumulate the developmental assets they need to grow into successful adults, such as positive values, conflict resolution, social competence, and leadership skills. Quality standards provide the framework for the work we do!

We appreciate you and your committee members for addressing this bill in such a timely manner and urge your support for passage. Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gayle N. Orange".

Gayle Orange
Executive Director